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Baker-Polito Administration Files Unemployment Legislation To Extend Benefits To Relocating Military Spouses

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today filed legislation that would extend unemployment benefits to the spouses of servicemembers who are forced to leave their jobs due to military relocation. Under current law, when military families are reassigned to areas outside of Massachusetts, military spouses are not eligible for unemployment insurance because they are considered to have left their job by their own choice. The legislation filed today corrects this portion of the unemployment statute and makes several other changes to state law that update and modernize the Unemployment Insurance program.

“When servicemembers are forced to relocate in order to serve their country, spouses of those soldiers shouldn’t be denied benefits for choosing to keep their families intact,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “This legislation corrects state law to ensure these spouses are no longer penalized for their family’s service, and makes other important changes to modernize the unemployment statute.”

“Military families make profound sacrifices for our country and Commonwealth, and we need to ensure our unemployment system does not deny them benefits when they are forced to move,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. “We are proud to file this bill that will fix this problem and ensure the unemployment statute meets the needs of the workers and employers of today’s economy.”

The proposed exception applies only to active-duty members of the military. In addition to the extension of unemployment insurance benefits to military spouses, the legislation would also make other changes, including expanding the Department of Unemployment Assistance's ability to recoup fraudulently claimed benefits and clarifying that prison work-release programs are not means for qualifying for unemployment insurance upon release.

“This legislation will help create fairness for our hard-working military families, make important changes to the unemployment statute that will save taxpayer dollars, and make the system more effective at serving Massachusetts’ workers and employers,” **said Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta.**

The Department of Unemployment Assistance, operated under the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, is responsible for managing the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, which provides temporary income to Massachusetts workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own and are able, available, and actively looking for work.

[Click here to read *An Act to Support Military Families and Unemployment Transformations*](#)

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